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Collaboration among the United Nations Rome-based Agencies: Delivering on the 2030 Agenda

Draft decision*

The Board takes note of “Collaboration among the United Nations Rome-based Agencies: Delivering on the 2030 Agenda” (WFP/EB.2/2016/4-D/Rev.1).

* This is a draft decision. For the final decision adopted by the Board, please refer to the Decisions and Recommendations document issued at the end of the session.

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Collaboration among the United Nations Rome-based Agencies: Delivering on the 2030 Agenda

Executive Summary

In September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly approved a framework for global action, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which will be implemented under government leadership, call for closer coordination of the United Nations system. The United Nations Rome-based agencies (RBAs) played a pivotal role in supporting Member States as they shaped the 2030 Agenda, and contributed substantively to its contents.

The membership of the three RBAs, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP), requested that a joint paper be prepared outlining the agencies' collaboration, including on how they will support countries in achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda.

This paper presents a common vision, guiding principles for enhanced collaboration, the distinctive strengths of each organization, prerequisites, and commitments on how RBA country teams can support governments. It outlines opportunities, challenges, how the agencies will work together based on particular contexts, and strengthened coordination efforts at the country, regional and global levels.

RBA collaboration is based on the agencies' respective mandates, related comparative advantages and distinctive strengths. The paper proposes four pillars of collaboration: i) working together at the country and regional levels; ii) cooperating at the global level; iii) collaborating on thematic knowledge; and iv) joint corporate services.

Future collaboration will focus on assisting countries in implementing the 2030 Agenda and achieving its goals; strengthening robust, broad and long-standing collaborative efforts; and current and ongoing priorities for RBA collaboration – country-level implementation of the 2030 Agenda, nutrition, resilience, data and statistics, and joint technical support to the Committee on World Food Security.

The 2030 Agenda and the SDGs constitute the greatest opportunity ever presented for RBA collaboration. By capitalizing on the respective strengths of the RBAs, the joint vision represents a step forward to strengthening collaboration in support of Member States in implementing the 2030 Agenda. Finding the best way to work together is the only way forward.

Introduction

Background – the Sustainable Development Goals

1. In September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly approved *Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* establishing a framework for global action to achieve sustainable development in its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental.
2. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which will be implemented by each country under government leadership, call for closer coordination and focused support of the United Nations system. Implementation will be pursued through collaboration, including through multi-stakeholder partnerships.
3. The Rome-based agencies (RBAs) played a pivotal role in supporting Member States as they shaped the 2030 Agenda, and substantively contributed to its contents. Member States recognized

the major role of the RBAs in setting SDG 2, “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture”. The RBAs jointly identified and prioritized indicators for SDG 2. In addition, in the process leading up to the 2015 Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the RBAs jointly advocated on the importance of investments in social protection and agriculture to help achieve SDG 2.

The Request from the Membership

4. In late 2015, the membership of the three RBAs, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP) requested that a joint paper¹ be prepared outlining their collaboration, including how they will support countries, together and individually, in implementing the goals of the 2030 Agenda.

The RBA Response – The Paper and its Contents

5. This paper presents a common vision² on how to strengthen RBA collaborative efforts further to support countries in the broader context of closer collaboration among the different elements of the United Nations system and among development finance institutions and development partners. The paper outlines a common vision, guiding principles, prerequisites, and commitments on how RBA country teams can support governments and work together in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda through enhanced coordination, while at the same time avoiding overlaps, duplication and gaps. This paper analyses the challenges and opportunities related to RBA collaboration and presents common actions foreseen for the near future. It also highlights areas where the RBAs should focus collectively, and some specific ways of doing this, while also recognizing that each agency has partnerships that lie beyond the RBAs’ scope.

II. The SDGs and the RBAs: A Common Vision, Opportunities and Challenges

A Common Vision: SDG 2 at the Heart of the Mandate of the RBAs

6. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 – Achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture – is at the heart of the mandates of the RBAs. The three agencies share a common vision of the sustainable development agenda, while recognizing that achieving SDG 2 requires holistic approaches. Progress towards one goal is not possible without progress towards other goals, and synergies and trade-offs among goals need to be addressed. The vision of ending hunger and malnutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture and rural transformation, with particular focus on smallholders – women and men alike – is a critical global imperative and a pivotal element of the entire 2030 Agenda. Given the interconnectedness of the 17 SDGs, the RBAs are fully cognizant of their central role in the 2030 Agenda as well as their strategic position in the wider United Nations context.
7. Supporting countries in achieving their goals requires investing in sustainable food systems, enhancing synergies for effectiveness, and strengthening robust, broad and long-standing collaborative efforts among the RBAs. The RBAs will consider country-specific contexts when providing complementary technical, operational and capacity support and investments. Furthermore, supporting countries in achieving the SDGs has implications for the way in which the agencies plan, act, communicate and report. RBA collaboration should be respectful of agreed principles and criteria for collaboration. It requires the three agencies to convene, catalyse, connect, facilitate, shift to a bottom-up approach, and implement activities in a way that mobilizes each agency’s technical, financial, organizational and distinctive strengths.

¹ The present paper builds on the 2009 “Directions for Collaboration among the Rome-based Agencies” document presented to the governing bodies of the three RBAs.

² This vision is based on the 2009 “Directions for Collaboration among the Rome-based Agencies”; IFAD’s 2015 “Collaboration among the United Nations Rome-based Agencies – Establishing a Baseline and Charting the Way Forward”; “Strengthening Resilience for Food Security and Nutrition – A Conceptual Framework for Collaboration and Partnership among the Rome-Based Agencies”; internal and external reviews and evaluations; direction provided by Member States; and good practices and lessons learned at the country, regional, and global levels.

8. FAO is a specialized agency of the United Nations, with a broad and deep technical and operational capacity, significant expertise in the production and global distribution of knowledge products, and a strategic and comprehensive network of decentralized offices. The Organization: i) facilitates, promotes and supports policy dialogue and partnerships at all levels; ii) analyses, monitors and disseminates data and information; iii) supports the development and implementation of normative instruments such as international agreements, codes of conduct, technical standards and others; and iv) advises and supports capacity development at the country and regional levels to prepare, implement, monitor and evaluate evidence-based policies, investments and programmes. Through its long-term country presence and work, FAO supports development programmes that boost productivity, create employment and increase the value of people's assets. When disaster and crises occur, FAO remains and deploys its capacities, unique relationships and knowledge to provide highly adapted emergency agricultural livelihood assistance, grounded in a perspective focused on resilience.
9. IFAD is the only United Nations specialized agency and international financial institution that focuses exclusively on reducing poverty and food insecurity in rural areas through agriculture and rural development. It contributes to shaping national policies and programmes, and in providing investment vehicles for governments, other development partners and the private sector, with smallholder farmers, pastoralists, artisanal fishers and other rural people at their centre. IFAD provides financing – loans and grants – for programmes aligned with countries' own development strategies, deploying innovative instruments for rural finance, access to markets and inclusive value chain development. IFAD's Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Programme is the largest global climate adaptation programme for smallholders. The Fund generates the knowledge and policy advice needed to assist it in reducing poverty in rural areas by supporting inclusive and dynamic rural transformation.
10. WFP is the world's largest humanitarian organization addressing the challenges of global hunger and nutrition. It provides emergency, recovery and development-based food assistance at scale. It offers common services in humanitarian settings, including procurement, logistics, engineering and information technology (IT) connectivity solutions. WFP's distinctive strengths include ability to operate in volatile situations, such as in conflict and following natural disasters; emergency preparedness and risk management; humanitarian–development joint needs assessment and combined data analysis; and purchasing power and supply chain capabilities that strengthen national markets and capacities. WFP applies these distinctive strengths in the continuum from emergency relief to development. It responds to food and nutrition needs, ensuring gender equality and empowerment; it provides practical capacity strengthening of a range of local first responders, governments and food system actors in the value chain; and it contributes to policy development that is relevant to its mandate. Governments and others recognize WFP as an important partner in the scale-up of cash-based transfers.

The Opportunities Provided by the SDGs for RBA Collaboration

11. The RBAs are well placed to contribute to implementation of the 2030 Agenda in a coordinated and mutually supportive manner around the central entry point of SDG 2, while each may also have strong entry points for supporting governments in realizing other goals and targets, individually or with other partners. The 2030 Agenda provides the RBAs with an opportunity to build on synergies, individual strengths, complementarities and comparative advantages, and their respective networks. Together, the RBAs offer a vast range of knowledge, financial and technical expertise for the different elements on this goal. They can leverage their convening power, global reach and country presence. They offer internationally recognized forums for discussing a range of policy issues related to food security, agriculture, and nutrition. They host several important secretariats and mechanisms for sustainable agriculture, food security and nutrition. Rome is centre to the United Nations' premier development, humanitarian and resilience assistance, services, knowledge and financing in the areas of food, agriculture and transformative rural development. In this regard, physical proximity presents many opportunities to capitalize on a range of products and services that can benefit countries in implementing the 2030 Agenda, again with particular focus on SDG 2.

12. Each RBA has developed its own constituency of partners and distinct and complementary networks, which extend outreach beyond Rome to include other United Nations agencies and national and local partners. This represents additional opportunities for each agency to leverage resources, knowledge, financing and implementation support from other development stakeholders.

The Challenge

13. The global scale of food insecurity and malnutrition will require significant efforts by the RBAs, both collectively and individually, to free the world from poverty and hunger. Protracted crises associated with climate change, instability, conflict and forced migration are posing additional challenges for the RBAs.
14. The fact that the SDGs are country-driven and nationally led, and that resources are always limited in relation to the scale of the challenges, will require the RBAs to work in an even more collaborative fashion, maximizing synergies and building on convergences, while avoiding unnecessary overlaps and duplication, to enhance efficiency and impact.
15. Current systemic and structural challenges to RBA collaboration include distinct governance structures, different government counterparts, business models, funding cycles, donor-specific priorities, instruments of development finance, organizational cultures, levels of decentralization, and country presence that have impacts on country-specific operational processes.
16. No matter how well funded they are, each of the RBAs will always face resource and time constraints that demand the setting of clear priorities and that may limit the incentives to invest in effective RBA partnership. This might also be constrained by the lack of systematic dialogue and coordination. Competition for resources, divergent priorities and the mixed scales of operation, as well as the inherent difficulty in setting criteria for when and when not to explore RBA collaboration, will inevitably pose additional challenges.

III. RBA Collaboration in Support of the SDGs

Guiding Principles, including Principles of Collaboration

17. RBA collaboration is based on the mandates and related comparative advantages and distinctive strengths of each partner. Future collaboration will continue to focus mainly on assisting countries in implementing the 2030 Agenda and achieving the SDGs and will build on global policy processes³ and on the guiding principles listed in the 2009 paper “Directions for Collaboration among the Rome-based Agencies”.⁴ These guiding principles for RBA collaboration are: i) partnerships are an integral part of the mandates of the three agencies; ii) a partnership is not an end in itself – rather it is a means for greater synergy, effectiveness and efficiency; iii) a proactive approach is taken in learning from experiences in partnerships; iv) collaboration is pursued in the context of United Nations system-wide coherence; and v) collaboration is driven by country-level processes.

³ Core global policy processes include the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; the Addis Ababa Action Agenda; the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 22); the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2); and the World Humanitarian Summit and its Commitment for Action.

⁴ http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/eb/wfp208557.pdf?_ga=1.5148731.943217398.1457436308

18. RBA collaboration should lead to a clear and mutually recognized added value in terms of results relevant to the goals and objectives set by the RBAs' Membership. Within this context, RBA collaboration should serve as a means for greater effectiveness in supporting international governance of agriculture, agricultural development, food security and nutrition, including through results-based monitoring and incorporating lessons learned.

Principles of Collaboration – Shared Priorities

19. Harnessing all of the above elements, this paper proposes using the four pillars of collaboration from the IFAD Position Paper of 2015:⁵ i) working together at the country and regional levels; ii) cooperating at the global level; iii) collaborating on thematic knowledge and themes; and iv) joint corporate services. The RBAs will use these four pillars when monitoring and reporting on the progress of RBA collaboration.
20. The current and ongoing priorities for RBA collaboration are: *country-level implementation of the 2030 Agenda; nutrition; resilience; data and statistics; and joint technical support to the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)*.
21. In addition to the shared priority areas listed above, the RBAs are collaborating, extensively and significantly, in many other areas at the global, regional and country levels and in a broad spectrum of thematic areas, as reported.⁶

Coordination Mechanisms – Meeting of Principals and Senior Consultative Group

22. The RBA Principals and the RBA Senior Consultative Group (RBA SCG) regularly convene to identify a set of shared priorities requiring collective efforts. The Senior Consultative Group (RBA-SCG) is composed of senior staff of the three agencies. The group meets regularly to discuss operational and administrative issues of mutual concern. It ensures close collaboration among the agencies and effective follow-up on the related joint decisions taken by the Principals. Its meetings are hosted by the RBAs on a rotational basis and chaired by the Deputy Principal of the hosting entity.

Collaboration at the Regional and Country Levels

23. In order to ensure maximum impact, the RBAs will ensure that new strategies, programmes and activities are in line with existing mandates, comparative advantages and distinctive strengths and that they build on the expertise and technical skills of each agency.
24. RBA regional teams will develop regional processes for determining focus countries, joint priority areas and joint monitoring of progress. Regional processes⁷ enable the RBAs to identify new opportunities for collaboration and projects that could be replicated or scaled up.
25. A concrete collaboration process at the country level, consistent with the work of the United Nations country teams and country-level United Nations coordination mechanisms, has RBA country representatives meet at least twice a year to take stock of ongoing collaboration and explore potential future joint activities –in terms of both short- and medium-term actions – according to their mandates and comparative strengths. The country teams identify country context-specific work plans. Based on these work plans, each team shares what has been achieved; what lessons have been learned; and what can be replicated at the regional level if the context and opportunities demand. Teams are also encouraged to ensure the sharing of information on progress, issues and innovations in their RBA partnerships. RBA country teams should meet regularly and agree on complementary roles to enhance effective leadership for collectively realizing progress *at scale* towards key SDGs, in line with national priorities

⁵ “Collaboration of the United Nations Rome-based Agencies” EB 2015/115/R.23a.

⁶ IFAD. 2015. “Collaboration among the United Nations Rome-based Agencies: Establishing a Baseline and Charting the Way Forward”.

⁷ A good example is a recent RBA planning meeting in the Asia and Pacific region at which thematic areas and focus countries where there may be opportunities for future joint RBA activity were identified. In such instances, RBA country teams may wish to identify further areas for joint programming where they could contribute to national government priorities.

26. The RBAs, particularly at the country level, can systematically inform each other of strategic and programmatic plans in the initial stages. This would enable country teams to plan proactively for potential joint or complementary activities and to mobilize resources jointly.
27. RBA country teams will undertake a mapping exercise to seek and identify gaps, overlaps and new opportunities for collaboration and joint programming, bearing in mind existing frameworks. This work should take into account existing frameworks such as the larger One UN initiative and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), and country-owned SDG implementation and review processes. For example, the United Nations Network for Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN), hosted at WFP and supported by the RBAs and other United Nations organizations, is already piloting joint country-based mapping exercises, referred to as the “United Nations Nutrition Inventory”. These catalogue the multi-sectoral nutrition actions delivered by different agencies to highlight gaps, complementarities and potential for synergies to address drivers of malnutrition.
28. In order to assist those most in need, many of whom live in fragile situations and endure protracted crises, the RBAs are replicating successful collaborative efforts. They will continue to provide a strong and coordinated approach to addressing fragility and building peaceful and resilient communities in order to achieve the SDGs. They will also develop standard operating procedures for emergencies, covering – inter alia – advocacy, response strategies, resource mobilization and access. For example, in 2015 the RBA resilience task team developed a joint framework that is guiding joint resilience programmes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guatemala, Kenya, the Niger and Somalia. The RBAs collaborate in many contexts and settings at the country level and will replicate and scale-up such examples as appropriate.
29. The RBAs are exploring modalities to enhance cross-sector, multi-sectoral and intra-governmental coordination at the country level. Promoting dialogue among sectors and the different levels of government will enhance and strengthen coordination. Where contexts permit, efforts will be made to combine and pool data, analysis and information; improve joint planning and programming; and identify financing modalities to support potential collective outcomes.
30. The governing bodies are invited to continue ensuring that respective RBA corporate strategies reflect the RBA collaboration approach. Member States and donors are encouraged to support RBA regional and country teams engaged in efforts to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of joint interventions and operational processes.
31. The biennial RBA Award of Excellence, now in its third year, recognizes RBA country teams that exemplify effective collaboration and maximize the value of partnerships. The winning country team and the other countries that applied for the award will continue to provide a sound basis for documenting good practices in enhancing, expanding and scaling up collaboration.

Collaboration at the Global Level

32. The RBAs will continue to work together at the global level – in Rome, New York, Geneva, or wherever such an opportunity occurs – in areas such as policy dialogue, communication and advocacy. The RBA SCG will ensure the coordinated RBA approach to advancing the food security and nutrition agenda at major global policy fora, including the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the G7, the G20, BRICS (Brazil, the Russian Federation, India, China and South Africa) and other core regional processes. They will jointly raise awareness on agriculture and rural development, food security and nutrition issues, including gender and youth, in international events such as World Food Day and International Women’s Day. They will jointly coordinate communication, advocacy and outreach on key global initiatives such as the Zero Hunger Challenge. The RBAs undertake to strengthen their joint support to the CFS, including in disseminating voluntary guidelines and policy recommendations resulting from multi-stakeholder negotiation processes.
33. The RBAs will continue jointly to prepare the report on the State of Food Insecurity in the World (SOFI).

34. The RBAs will continue to work with Member States to strengthen their capacity to monitor and report on food security and nutrition situations around the world. The SDG indicator framework will effectively monitor progress towards the targets that countries have set for themselves.
35. By adhering to the recommendations of the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review 2017–2020,⁸ the RBAs will align their core functions to the 2030 Agenda and continue to address common challenges faced by the wider United Nations system in assisting countries in implementing the SDGS.
36. The joint leadership by FAO and WFP of the United Nations global Food Security Cluster (gFSC) – one of the major instruments for improved global humanitarian response at the regional and country levels – is an excellent model of successful collaboration within the RBA partnership.

Collaboration on Thematic Issues

37. The RBAs will continue to respond to both emerging thematic areas and the requests of Member States where their combined knowledge and capacities can provide added value. Each RBA brings unique competencies and strengths, based on its mandate and technical and strategic depth, which – when combined – can assist in preventing shocks and crises, reducing such impacts and acting as engines for post-crisis recovery and resilience building. The RBAs have established thematic teams and working groups in areas such as resilience, climate change, financial inclusion, value chain approaches for nutrition,⁹ South–South and triangular cooperation, food security information, Purchase for Progress, gender, and food losses and waste. These groups and teams are encouraged to promote joint approaches and document best practices and lessons learned. The reporting that emerges from these groups and teams will ensure their alignment with the broad objective of contributing to the SDG targets.
38. For example, the RBAs see the Decade of Action on Nutrition of 2016–2025 as an opportunity and key platform for expanding their partnership on nutrition further. A work plan is currently under development and will be based on the Rome Declaration and the ICN2 Framework for Action.
39. Moreover, the United Nations Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN), a global initiative that is hosted by FAO and supported by the RBAs and other United Nations organizations, has developed a new strategic plan in 2016 that provides a basis for enhanced collaboration within the United Nations family and joint programming in the area of nutrition at the country level.
40. The RBAs have a critical role to play in supporting implementation of the Paris Agreement of the UNFCCC. The RBAs will build on their existing collaboration, follow a coherent approach and continue to provide UNFCCC Parties with technical support in addressing the impacts of climate change on food security and nutrition.
41. By mobilizing the individual strengths of the three agencies, food loss reduction initiatives will have significant impact and influence in stimulating member countries to take action to reduce food losses.

Joint Corporate Services

42. The RBAs will continue to seek opportunities to increase efficiency and effectiveness through joint corporate services at Headquarters and in the field. Sharing of common office premises is occurring in many countries and continues to be encouraged. For example, of the 41 IFAD country offices, more than 40 percent are hosted by FAO or WFP – ten by FAO and seven by WFP. IFAD expects more offices to be hosted by the other RBAs in the future, as it expands its country presence. Such practices not only increase cost-efficiency but also enhance

⁸ “Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review of Operational Activities for Development of the United Nations System: Recommendations”

⁹ The Joint RBA Working Group on Nutrition-Sensitive Value Chains is working to build understanding of how the food system can be leveraged for improved nutrition. This collaborative effort will serve as a powerful tool for strengthening RBA partnership at the country level in nutrition, with each agency contributing unique comparative advantages to making value chains more nutrition-sensitive.

communication and potential collaboration among the agencies. The RBAs will continue to strengthen joint activities in the areas of evaluation, audit, investigation, finance and administration.

43. The RBAs will develop a joint webpage accessible from the main websites of the three agencies, where common undertakings and activities will be highlighted and reported on.

The Way Forward

44. The RBA SCG will continue to review and set annual joint priorities, with a commitment to accountability for achievement to be reported on annually to the RBA Principals. The RBA SCG will address challenges to the expansion and strengthening of RBA collaboration. It will also discuss the systematizing and harmonizing of reporting to governing bodies on RBA matters.
45. The executive leadership of each RBA will ensure that staff at all levels are acquainted with the paramount importance of forging strategic RBA alliances at the country, regional and global level, underscoring the importance of collaborative engagements based on specific contexts and an agreed sharing of responsibilities in areas related to the agencies' respective mandates.
46. Focal points at the senior executive level of each RBA will be designated to ensure that unique and context-specific RBA collaboration challenges are addressed jointly.
47. The RBAs will expand joint in-depth analysis of ongoing collaboration, with a focus on the country and regional levels, and develop good practices for a range of contexts, highlighting common challenges, approaches and innovations, scaling up effective joint programming, and developing new joint initiatives.
48. This collaboration will build on earlier agreements such as the RBA Joint Resilience Framework¹⁰ in a number of areas of policy dialogue; analysis and planning; joint programming; and monitoring impacts and measuring resilience. Another example is the Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises,¹¹ which in 2015 the membership of the Committee on World Food Security endorsed.
49. In addition to what has been outlined above, the RBAs will embark on a set of common actions, including but not limited to the following:
 - analysing RBA collaboration that can inform different, context-specific collaboration models;
 - based on the above analysis, developing tools for the RBA country teams to draw on when developing new and replicating effective existing joint programming;
 - considering RBA collaboration at all stages of the project/programme cycle;¹²
 - jointly defining a common results framework for their areas of collaboration and partnership; and
 - presenting the status of RBA collaboration to the respective governing bodies through systematic and regular reporting, drawing on results in terms of qualitative and quantitative descriptions of activities, outputs and achievements emanating from RBA collaboration.

¹⁰ <http://www.wfp.org/RBA-joint-resilience-framework>: “Strengthening Resilience for Food Security and Nutrition: A Conceptual Framework for Collaboration and Partnership among the Rome-based Agencies” (April 2015).

¹¹ <http://www.fao.org/cfs/cfs-home/activities/ffa/en/>

¹² For example, through FAO's Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs), IFAD's Country Strategic Opportunities Programme (COSOP) and WFP's Country Strategic Plans (CSPs).

IV. Conclusion

50. The 2030 Agenda and the SDGs constitute the greatest opportunity ever presented for RBA collaboration, while the Agenda also represents the three agencies' biggest challenge. For the RBAs, finding the best way to work together to support those most in need and help Member States achieve the SDGs, while benefiting from their own individual strengths and comparative advantages is the only way forward.
51. The joint vision and suggested future actions take the opportunities and challenges highlighted earlier into account and adopt support to Members in achieving the SDGs as the central point of convergence.
52. The Principals and senior levels of leadership of the RBAs have committed to focusing their joint work on realization of the SDGs through forms of collaboration that yield enhanced impacts and improved efficiencies.
53. The increased focus on RBA collaboration has created a learning opportunity for the agencies both to recognize progress over time and to work together to resolve limitations encountered over the course of collaborative efforts.
54. A key recurring lesson in RBA collaboration is the importance of clear and agreed upon roles and responsibilities that give rise to effective division of labour. RBA collaboration will thus be based on strong commitments to collective actions in each operational context, and agreed distributions of tasks reflecting the mandates and distinctive strengths of each RBA.
55. While stressing the importance of RBA collaboration within the context of the SDGs, it is recognized that each of the RBAs maintains its own set of partnerships with other United Nations organizations, international financial institutions and other relevant stakeholders.
56. This paper, by capitalizing on the respective strengths of the RBAs, represents a step forward in strengthening RBA collaboration in support of Member States' implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In the spirit of the country-level focus of the SDGs, the priority for operationalizing the RBA common vision has been presented in this paper.

Country-Level Collaboration

In 2015, all three RBAs collaborated on 26 projects in 21 countries, compared with 21 projects in 18 countries in 2014. On a bilateral basis, FAO and WFP collaborated on 120 projects in 65 countries, and IFAD and WFP on 31 projects in 24 countries.¹³ Currently, FAO supports the formulation and implementation of 22 IFAD-financed projects. The main areas of country-level collaboration included agricultural projects, joint food security assessments and thematic groups, social protection, capacity development, resilience initiatives, and emergency preparedness and relief operations. An RBA Award of Excellence that recognizes RBA country teams that exemplify effective collaboration and maximize the value of partnerships is given every two years. Some examples of RBA collaboration at the country level are listed below.

Bangladesh

Through the joint project on Adaptive Early Recovery in Waterlogged Areas of Southwest Bangladesh, FAO, WFP and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) identified priority interventions for preventing waterlogging and enhancing the resilience of the most vulnerable households and communities in Satkhira. IFAD and WFP jointly funded a study on the impact of climate-related shocks and stresses on nutrition and food security in selected areas of rural Bangladesh. Findings suggested that nutrition and food security are greatly affected for up to eight to ten months after a climate-related shock or stress.

Guatemala

In collaboration with FAO, IFAD and WFP, the Government of Guatemala has been developing a joint vision on resilience in the country's Dry Corridor. FAO is responsible for technical support to the country in the areas of food and nutrition security, rural territorial development, and efficient, sustainable and resilient agricultural production. IFAD implements actions to enhance absorption, adaptation and processing capacities in agricultural production activities, and strengthens platforms for dialogue and decision-making at the local level. WFP promotes the Resilient Communities Programme (ComRes) by providing assistance in the form of food, cash and vouchers for the creation of assets and for training among the most vulnerable communities. The goal of the joint initiative is to systematize a pilot for the design of national programmes, in support of the Government of Guatemala.

Kenya

The three RBAs bring complementary strengths to build resilience in Kenya. RBA joint efforts are focused primarily on Kenya's arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs). One of the ground-breaking partnerships involving the three RBAs is the Kenya Cereal Enhancement Programme–Climate Resilient Agricultural Livelihoods Window (KCEP-CRAL). In strengthening community resilience for market-oriented farming, food security and nutrition, WFP targets food-insecure people through a cash-for-assets programme for building productive assets. FAO provides these interventions with technical support on stabilizing degraded landscapes, reducing the risk of future and seasonal hardships, improving natural regeneration and boosting agricultural production and incomes. IFAD supports the transition to market-based farming of smallholder farmers in ASALs, matching this support with investments in improved natural resource management and resilience to climate change at the country and household levels. Under the project, the three RBAs, jointly with the Government, have developed and agreed criteria for beneficiary selection and targeting.

Jordan and Lebanon

Within the framework of the Syrian response, the RBAs are restoring livelihoods and creating economic opportunities in Lebanon and Jordan. The main objective is to improve market access and food security for smallholder farmers and producers. FAO and WFP are coordinating and collaborating in a number of ways including: i) supporting semi-intensive poultry producers to enhance their food security,

¹³ [Update on Collaboration Among the Rome-based Agencies: A WFP Perspective \(2015–2016\)](#). WFP/EB.2/2016/4-E

nutrition and agricultural livelihoods, and increase access to high-quality protein; ii) enhancing the food security and livelihoods of host communities and Syrian refugees through agricultural investments; and iii) improving the nutritional value of the agricultural systems of Syrian refugees and host communities through microgardening. Most recently, in September 2016, IFAD established a Facility for Refugees, Migrants, Forced Displacement and Rural Stability (FARMS) with the aim of mobilizing supplementary funds to finance targeted and inclusive interventions that benefit both affected households and their host communities in ten countries in the Near East Region, including Jordan and Lebanon. This new initiative will corroborate with the RBAs' engagement in the region.

Madagascar

In Madagascar, the three RBAs participated in the formulation of each other's country strategies to ensure synergies and complementarities. The RBAs are engaged in a partnership to implement the Integrated Actions in Nutrition and Food (AINA) project. In implementing this project, the RBAs utilize their distinctive strengths: FAO focuses on post-harvest and storage, seed production, crop diversification and capacity building; IFAD supports crop production, processing, value chains and infrastructure; and WFP assists in local food purchase/procurement and distribution, nutrition education, specialized food distribution, and creation/rehabilitation of community assets. In the context of the response to El Niño, FAO and WFP have agreed on a joint plan to reduce food consumption gaps and rebuild livelihoods. FAO will focus on agricultural and livelihood support, including seeds, planting materials and tools, animal feed and deworming treatments for livestock. To the extent possible, WFP's interventions will target the same households benefitting from FAO livelihood support.

Niger

The common objective of the RBA country strategies¹⁴ is to strengthen the resilience of vulnerable populations and improve food security and nutrition while supporting the Government's efforts to achieve zero hunger. FAO and IFAD focus on the systemic, long-term response and bring in their technical expertise, which they anchor in national institutions to ensure leadership, while WFP supports the most vulnerable people, reconnecting them to the system and helping them to participate in their country's development, bridging the gap between emergency and development responses. In addition to a framework for operational collaboration, with common targeting and partners, the RBAs have engaged in seven joint programmes, projects and initiatives in support of food security, nutrition, resilience and the empowerment of rural women. They are also engaged in the Renewed Efforts Against Child Hunger and Undernutrition (REACH) and Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movements.

Sri Lanka

The RBAs collaborate with the Government of Sri Lanka on scaling up nutrition through a multisectoral approach in which WFP is responsible for the policy on school feeding and fortification components and FAO is in charge of aspects related to nutrition education, school gardens and setting up a system for measuring the impact of nutrition interventions on schoolchildren.

¹⁴ FAO's Country Programme Framework (CPF) 2013–2016; IFAD's Country Strategic Opportunities Programme (COSOP) 2013–2018; and WFP's Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO) 2005/83 2014–2016 and the PRRO for 2017–2019 currently under development;

Global Collaboration

The RBAs collaborate in several global initiatives and global policy fora through policy dialogue, communication, joint awareness raising and sensitization, and the provision of technical inputs to decision-makers related to agriculture and food and nutrition security. The following are a few examples of this collaboration.

CFS: In 2016, the RBAs continued to provide financial and staffing support to the Secretariat of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS). In addition, they also worked in a coordinated and complementary fashion to provide technical inputs for all CFS inter-sessional work streams and to take part in negotiations on policy recommendations in several areas of common concern to all three organizations, such as the 2030 Agenda, smallholders' access to markets, and nutrition.

COP 21 and 22: During negotiation of the Paris Agreement at the Twenty-First Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the RBAs supported countries in identifying ways of addressing the impacts of climate change on food security, and highlighting the importance of building the climate resilience of the most food-insecure and vulnerable people. The RBAs also organized a joint side-event on food security and agriculture during the Conference. In the same way, during COP 22, the RBAs will continue to provide technical support to both UNFCCC processes and member countries, assisting them in making informed decisions. Under COP 22, the RBAs will also jointly organize events on climate finance for resilience investments and the achievement of zero hunger under a changing climate.

gFSC: FAO and WFP co-lead the global Food Security Cluster (gFSC), which in 2015 was activated in Level 3 emergencies in the Central African Republic, Iraq, Nepal, South Sudan, the Syrian region and Yemen. In South Sudan, the gFSC coordinated 100 partners to deliver food and cash transfers to 1.5 million people and livelihoods support to more than 3.5 million. Also in 2015, the gFSC provided in-country training and support in emergencies in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, Nepal, the Niger, Pakistan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Ukraine. This support resulted in better reporting to stakeholders, informing responses through gap analysis while raising the profile of food security and livelihood operations.

G20: The RBAs have collaborated in their engagements with the G20 since late 2010, focusing on the G20 Development Working Group and the Agriculture Ministers' work stream. In May 2016, the RBAs attended the G20 Agriculture Deputies Meeting in China at the principals' level, and contributed to elaboration of the Ministerial Communiqué, which makes specific reference to the RBAs' individual and joint work on food and nutrition security. As in previous years, the RBAs also contributed in a coordinated fashion to the work of the G20 Development Working Group, including, *inter alia*, preparation of the G20 Action Plan on implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The RBAs also participated in the G20 Meeting of Agricultural Scientists on joint initiatives such as the Tropical Agriculture Platform (TAP). This is additional to the individual contributions that FAO, IFAD and WFP made to the G20 process under the Chinese Presidency.

HABITAT III: The RBAs provided technical support to Member States throughout negotiations for the Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (HABITAT III), including at the third session of the Preparatory Committee in Surabaya, Indonesia. Their individual and joint efforts have been instrumental in contributing to the design of a New Urban Agenda, which recognizes the importance of addressing food security and nutrition in the context of urbanization, and the importance of rural–urban linkages and smallholder agriculture.

SOFI: The RBAs collaborate on development of the State of Food Insecurity in the World (SOFI) report. The 2015 report analysed progress since 1990 towards Millennium Development Goal 1 on hunger, identifying major factors of success in the fight against hunger, and remaining challenges. Planning of the 2017 expanded report, which will involve collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) and include indicators for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2, is under way.

Zero Hunger Challenge: During the 2015 United Nations General Assembly, the RBAs and the Office of the Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth hosted a special event – “Generation Zero Hunger” – focusing on how young people can engage in actions for achieving zero hunger by 2030. The RBAs served as focal points for the United Nations’ participation in Expo Milano 2015 and collaborated on enhancing the visibility of the United Nations and the Zero Hunger Challenge. Also in 2015, the RBAs organized a side-event, “Achieving Zero Hunger: The Critical Role of Investments in Social Protection and Agriculture”, during the Third International Conference on Finance for Development held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; the side-event was based on an RBA report of the same title. During the 2016 United Nations General Assembly, an RBA side-event, “Pathways to Zero Hunger”, showcased concrete transformations in food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture that directly contribute to delivery on the 2030 Agenda. In the second half of 2016, the RBAs have been jointly taking responsibility for transitioning leadership of the Zero Hunger Challenge to the new United Nations Secretary-General, as part of the legacy of outgoing Secretary-General Ban-Ki Moon.

Multi-Stakeholder Platforms, Networks and Fora

The RBAs not only engage in global-level initiatives, but also play a prominent role in hosting multi-stakeholder platforms, networks and fora at their headquarters. In addition to serving as an important mechanism for RBA collaboration, these platforms also enable the RBAs collectively to collaborate with a large number of other stakeholders.

RBA-Hosted Multi-Stakeholder Platforms

FAO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee on World Food Security • Global Forum for Agriculture Research • Agriculture Market Information System • Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock • Global Partnership for Climate, Fisheries and Aquaculture • United Nations Standing Committee on Nutrition
IFAD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Land Coalition • Indigenous Peoples’ Forum • Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility • Farmers Forum • Platform for Agricultural Risk Management • Financing Facility for Remittances
WFP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Security Information Network • United Nations Network for Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) • Global Food Security Cluster, Inter-Agency Standing Committee

Collaboration on Thematic Issues

The RBAs collaborate in a wide range of thematic areas and working groups, combining knowledge and providing added value to initiatives that provide core contributions towards the broad objective of achieving the SDG targets.

Climate change: Geographic information systems (GIS) and earth observation (EO) have contributed to strengthening the internal capacities in GIS/EO issues of both IFAD and WFP. Joint climate analysis by the two agencies started in 2014 with coordinated programming, sharing of expertise, cost sharing and other forms of collaboration. The RBAs, together with the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), are operationalizing Anticipate, Absorb, Reshape (A2R), a new global multi-stakeholder initiative on climate resilience launched at COP 21, which focuses on accelerating action to strengthen climate resilience and will strengthen the three capacities – anticipation, absorption and reshaping – that are crucial to the climate resilience of the most vulnerable countries and people. The RBAs also engage actively in UNFCCC.

Data and statistics – SDG 2: The RBAs will continue to support the global indicator framework and related work by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators; the framework is also a useful tool for global monitoring. In November 2015, IFAD headquarters hosted a technical seminar on the evaluability of work to achieve SDG 2, end hunger, achieve food security and nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture. The seminar set the basis for future development of a shared evaluation agenda for SDG 2.

El Niño and La Niña: The heads of the three RBAs urged greater preparedness to deal with a possible La Niña climate event in late 2016, closely related to the El Niño cycle that has had a severe impact on agriculture and food security. In October 2015, the Food Security Climate Resilience Facility (FoodSECuRE) was piloted in Zimbabwe to avert the anticipated negative impacts of El Niño. FAO, WFP and the extension service of Zimbabwe’s Ministry of Agriculture are now field-testing the early action modality under FoodSECuRE window I to bolster the resilience of affected smallholder farmer households through the cultivation of drought-tolerant small grains.

Food losses and waste: The RBAs are jointly implementing a new project on food losses, “Mainstreaming Food Loss Reduction Initiatives for Smallholders in Food-Deficit Areas”. The project aims to set up an innovative global reference centre on food losses and to inform national and regional policy through field-level activities in Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda. It will contribute both to improving food security and to operationalizing the Zero Hunger Challenge, which includes zero loss or waste of food as one of its main elements. One of the major outcomes of the project is the Community of Practice on food loss reduction, which serves as a global convener and integrator of knowledge related to post-harvest loss reduction. The Community of Practice offers a platform for facilitating linkages and sharing information among stakeholders and relevant networks.

Food Security Information Network (FSIN): FAO and WFP, together with the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), are members and co-sponsors of FSIN. Currently, IFAD is extending its partnerships with the network. FSIN is a global initiative for strengthening food and nutrition security information systems to produce reliable and accurate data for guiding analysis and decision-making

Gender: In 2015, the RBAs conducted the third peer review of their performance in implementing the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN SWAP). Outcomes included an agreement to share experiences and learning in selected thematic areas, and a list of the contact details of the agencies’ focal points for UN SWAP performance indicators. Contributions from donor countries in past years have led to a scaling up of activities under the FAO, IFAD, WFP, UN-Women joint initiative on *Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women* (RWEE), which is implemented in Ethiopia, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Nepal, the Niger and Rwanda. RWEE aims to secure rural women’s livelihoods and rights in the context of sustainable development. In coordination with UN-Women, the RBAs sponsored a General Recommendation to Article 14 of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of

Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), to ensure that the rights of rural women are highlighted not only in Article 14 but also throughout the Convention. The General Recommendation was adopted by the CEDAW Committee in March 2016. A ceremony for International Women's Day was organized jointly by the RBAs at WFP headquarters in March 2016. The theme was "Planet 50-50 by 2030: Step it Up for Gender Equality and Zero Hunger".

Nutrition: The RBAs have been working with other United Nations agencies on developing a new strategic plan for the United Nations System Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN), which has moved its headquarters from WHO to FAO. The RBAs also took part in a CFS technical task team developing a proposal and work streams for identifying the CFS's role in nutrition. In addition, the RBAs contributed to the new strategy of the United Nations SUN Network, and are present in many country-level SUN networks. In 2015, an RBA working group was set up to promote knowledge management and partnerships on sustainable food value chains for nutrition. The findings of the working group regarding a proposed joint framework for the development of nutrition-sensitive value chains – including preparation of a joint background paper – were presented at a special event at the 43rd Session of the CFS in October 2016, and at the UNSCN event on "Nutrition and Trade" in June 2016. The RBA working group is now developing a road map for further joint actions at the headquarters, regional and country levels. FAO and WHO will lead work related to the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition, in collaboration with IFAD, WFP and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

Purchase for Progress: FAO and IFAD have been core strategic and operational partners in WFP's Purchase for Progress (P4P) programme since its launch in 2008. P4P leverages WFP's demand and that of other buyers to encourage smallholder farmers to invest in their agricultural activities and to catalyse broad capacity development and policy-level support from a wide variety of partners. WFP's collaboration with FAO and IFAD has been guided by a June 2008 memorandum of understanding. An RBA working group was established for P4P in March 2014. Field-level collaboration continues to strengthen programming by providing participating farmers and farmers' organizations with support in areas including production and productivity, and access to finance.

Resilience: The RBAs developed a joint conceptual framework, "Strengthening Resilience for Food Security and Nutrition", to increase and improve their work together and with partners on strengthening the resilience of the most food-insecure people. Based on the framework, a set of joint case studies – from Kenya, Guatemala and the Niger – were developed to explore ongoing efforts and future opportunities for greater collaboration among the RBAs on building resilience. The RBAs also developed joint funding proposals for strengthening the resilience of livelihoods in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Niger and Somalia. The proposals were submitted to the Office for International Humanitarian Assistance of Global Affairs Canada, which committed to providing five years of funding to joint RBA programmes. In addition, FAO and WFP are core partners in the Resilience Analysis Unit (RAU) led by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). Major outputs include analyses of resilience contexts, a joint communication strategy and e-learning tools.

Social protection: Governments' increasing interest in home-grown school meals calls for harmonized guidance on the design and implementation of home-grown school feeding programmes. In January 2016, a technical working group involving FAO, WFP, the WFP Centre of Excellence Against Hunger, the Partnership for Child Development and the Global Child Nutrition Forum was established to produce joint guidelines.

South-South and triangular cooperation: The RBAs jointly contributed to an information brief on the framework for United Nations inter-agency collaboration on supporting South-South and triangular cooperation in the areas of climate change, food security and nutrition, and HIV/AIDS. The brief outlines each agency's experience of South-South and triangular cooperation, provides examples of existing RBA collaboration, and identifies areas at the global, regional and national levels where collaboration could be increased. In June 2016, in Xi'an, China, the RBA Principals attended the South-South Cooperation Roundtable where China and the RBAs agreed to expand their partnership and enhance South-South cooperation to achieve goals and targets in the 2030 Agenda related to agriculture and food security and nutrition.

RBA Joint Corporate Services

The RBAs maintain extensive collaboration on corporate services. The main areas of cooperation are highlighted in the following.

Blast assessments: WFP performs blast assessments globally, including for the RBAs. The service is provided on a cost-recovery basis, and helps ensure that United Nations premises are safe from a wide variety of attacks.

Collaboration on business continuity/disaster recovery: A memorandum of understanding between FAO and IFAD provides the basis for reciprocal hosting of business continuity/disaster recovery arrangements. IFAD is also finalizing a memorandum of understanding with WFP on hosting each other's business continuity/disaster recovery sites.

Common Procurement Team (CPT): The CPT has promoted joint procurement and is now moving to a more selective approach with regard to joint tendering. A lead agency concept is being explored to enhance efficiency. Better integration of the FAO/IFAD/WFP e-tendering system is also being explored.

Corporate airfare agreements: The RBAs continue to conduct joint negotiations with airlines for competitive corporate fares. The RBAs have recently concluded negotiations for global airline contracts with airlines that include Emirates and the SkyTeam group, for global preferred fares to support decentralized ticketing.

Corporate environmental responsibility – “greening”: The RBAs collaborate to foster continuous improvement in environmental practice and reporting in the Issues Management Group on Environmental Sustainability Management (IMG). Working together in partnership with UNEP, the RBAs' environmental focal points have delivered interagency guidance and briefing packages on waste management and a business case for environmental management systems. In Rome, focal points work to improve the sustainability of services such as energy provision, catering and stationery, building on the use of common contractors where possible and sharing best practices in energy efficiency and carbon management.

Governance processes: Since 2014, the RBAs have collaborated on facilitating governance processes. Important activities during this period include coordinating the RBAs' calendars of formal and informal meetings; coordinating interpretation and translation services; sharing experiences of governance methods, systems and technologies; and pooling conference facilities.

Hosting of country offices: IFAD has entered into service agreements with both FAO and WFP, setting forth the general principles and terms related to providing office space and logistics and administrative support to IFAD in establishing country offices. In addition, FAO and IFAD have been allocated common office premises by the Government of Ghana free of rent. It is expected that in the next two to three years IFAD will enter into additional service level agreement(s) with FAO and/or WFP, thus increasing the level of collaboration among the RBAs in areas such as field security, field security training, general administration, human resources, information technology support, privileges and immunities.

Human resources: The RBAs signed a framework agreement on the recruitment, selection and appointment of General Service (GS) staff based in Rome. Collaboration has continued in the area of temporary GS personnel assignments in the three agencies. Thanks to this agreement, the RBAs will broaden the GS talent pool in Rome and offer increased career opportunities to GS staff members of the three agencies. In addition, FAO and WFP have signed an agreement on the social security services that FAO provides to WFP's international and headquarters GS staff and to locally recruited field staff. These services include medical insurance, life insurance, the pension fund and the compensation plan and services.

Internal oversight services: Cooperation includes joint advertisement and management of common rosters of audit and investigation consultants; joint selection of outsourced firms for framework agreements; joint auditing of common RBA activities; cross-agency capacity support through staff secondments; and joint training.

Joint procurement of treasury services: The treasury functions of the RBAs collaborate through participation in each other's investment committees to share knowledge and best practices.

Security training: The RBAs regularly conduct training in specific areas of security, inviting the staff of other agencies to attend. There is also collaboration on evacuation drills, business continuity exercises and the exchange of staff during large corporate events. A common badge system allowing staff access to all three agencies is monitored by security staff from the RBAs.

Staff pension committee: The secretaries of the FAO, WFP and IFAD pension committees regularly discuss pension fund matters to facilitate the joint resolution of any issues with the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF).

Terminology cooperation: since 2015, the three RBAs have shared their terminology resources in the FAOTERM Portal, which now hosts IFADTERM and WFPTERM. The Portal enables wider distribution of data and savings through the development of a common database.

Acronyms Used in the Document

FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
gFSC	United Nations global Food Security Cluster
ICN2	Second International Conference on Nutrition
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IT	information technology
RBA	United Nations Rome-based agencies
RBA SCG	RBA Senior Consultative Group
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SOFI	State of Food Insecurity in the World
SUN	Scaling Up Nutrition
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNSCN	United Nations Standing Committee on Nutrition